

Littleneck Clams, Early Local Corn, Spicy Fermented Black Beans Broth, Fresh Noodles

Serves 4

Clams love spice and corn. Ginger and fermented black beans give a very authentic Chinese flavor to this dish. Be careful not to overcook the clams, steaming until they just open.

- 4 doz. Clams (Littlenecks are easier to get but Manila clams from the West Coast are incredibly delicious. Do not buy clams bigger than littlenecks as they will be tough.)
- 1 Tbs. Coarse cornmeal
- 2 Tbs. Dried fermented black beans
- 2 ears Fresh corn, shucked and cut off the cob
- 4-6 ea. Dried red chilis
- 1 inch Chunk of ginger, diced very small
- 2 clv. Garlic, sliced thinly
- $\frac{3}{4}$ C. Sake
- 2 # Fresh lo mein noodles (available frozen at Asian stores)
- 2 Tbs. Whole butter
- $\frac{1}{4}$ C. Cilantro leaves
- 3 ea. Scallions sliced thinly on a bias

1. Place clams and cornmeal in a large bowl and cover with cold water. Let stand for 30 to 40 minutes and allow the clams to purge the grit with the cornmeal. Scrub each clam with a nylon scrubby. Rinse and drain.
2. Place fermented black beans in warm water. Let soak for 15-20 minutes. Strain and squeeze out excess water. Discard soaking liquid.
3. Put a large pot of salted water on the stove to cook the noodles.
4. Put clams, beans, corn, chilis, ginger, garlic, and sake in a heavy pot. Cover with a lid and place over high heat.
5. While the clams steam, cook lo mein in the boiling pasta water for 2-3 minutes. Strain and reserve noodles and a little pasta water.
6. When clams open, add hot noodles, butter, and cilantro. Stir together. If the sauce needs a little liquid add a little pasta water.
7. Place on plates and garnish with sliced scallions.